



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Tonalea families to receive long-awaited power line extensions with signing of agreement by President Nez

TONALEA, Ariz. – On Saturday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez was joined by elders and families in Tonalea, Ariz. as he finalized a subgrant agreement between the Navajo Nation and Navajo Tribal Utility Authority to extend power lines to homes in the community of Tonalea, Ariz., which will provide long-awaited electricity to at least 23 the families – many of whom have lived their entire lives without electricity.



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez signs a subgrant agreement for Navajo Tribal Utility Authority to provide power line extensions to 23 homes in Tonalea, Ariz. on Sept. 4, 2021.

Tonalea Chapter President Darryl Jim, Tonalea Chapter Vice President Leslie Dele, Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish, Legislative District Assistant for Council Delegate Paul Begay, and Jerry Williams joined President Nez for the signing. President Nez spoke about the importance of building and improving the Nation's infrastructure to provide long-term benefits for communities and families. In 2019, President Nez and Vice President Lizer also approved \$3 million for the design and construction of a new chapter house, which is near completion.

"Two years ago, Vice President Lizer and I were here in Tonalea to sign off on funding for a new chapter house facility. I am excited to be here today with all of the leaders and families to move us another step forward to make this community stronger and to help build our Nation. With every bit of funding that we secure, we need to think about the long-term vision for our communities and the steps we need to take to ensure that future generations have the basic infrastructure in place years from now. I thank the current and former Tonalea Chapter leaders, NTUA, and many others who supported this effort for many years," said President Nez.

Several Tonalea residents who are scheduled to receive electricity were also in attendance and spoke about the challenges and expenses they have endured for many years due to the lack of electricity in their homes. One elderly resident shed tears as she recalled receiving electricity for

the very first time recently. She now has a refrigerator to store her food and other necessities and no longer has to rely on a generator for power.

Tonalea resident, Selena Slim, said she has lived in Tonalea her entire life without electricity and spends \$75 on a regular basis to purchase gasoline for her generator to provide electric power for her home. She recalled that when schools switched to virtual learning at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, she had to pay even more money for gasoline to provide internet service for her children to complete online instruction.

NTUA officials were also in attendance and showed their support for the families, including NTUA Kayenta District Manager Vircynthia Charley, Community Powerline Project Manager Louella Chee, Executive Assistant for the General Manager's office Durinda Skeets, and Public Affairs Manager Deenise Becenti.

"We heard and understand the struggle the families have been facing for all these years," said Charley. "Hearing this makes our commitment stronger to bring much-needed utility services to families without."



PHOTO: Tonalea resident Selena Slim speaks during the signing ceremony in Tonalea, Ariz. on Sept. 4, 2021.

Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office Executive Director Robert Black was also present for the signing of the agreement for the 23 homes that are located in the former Bennett Freeze area. He stated that his office continues to support and advocate for additional funding and resources to provide electricity, water, and other basic infrastructure for more families.

Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish stated that the Tonalea signing ceremony would be her last official public event before the end of her reign. She recalled that her first official event as Miss Navajo Nation in 2019, was also in Tonalea for the approval of the funding for the new chapter facility. She thanked the local residents for their support and encouraged them to continue working toward more accomplishments for their community.

NTUA General Manager Walter Haase stated, "We share in the excitement of the 23 families. We commend Tonalea chapter and the CDBG program for working so diligently on behalf of the families to get this project ready for NN President Jonathan Nez to sign. We look forward to starting construction on this project to extend electricity to the families who have been waiting to enjoy the basic modern conveniences like refrigerated food, heating, air conditioning, including being able to recharge their mobile phones in the comfort of their own homes."

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